



**Testimony  
Elizabeth Gara  
Connecticut Water Works Association  
Before the Energy Committee  
March 10, 2016**

**RE: SB-394 - AN ACT CONCERNING VIRTUAL NET METERING AND CERTAIN ZERO OR LOW EMISSION GENERATION PROJECTS**

The Connecticut Water Works Association (CWWA), which represents municipal, private and regional water utilities, supports efforts to expand the use of virtual net metering in ways that will help promote energy efficiency and environmental sustainability. Accordingly, **CWWA supports SB-394 but urges lawmakers to consider authorizing water utilities, which is a highly energy intensive industry, to utilize virtual net metering to help shave the load.**

The state's Comprehensive Energy Strategy recognizes that treating and distributing public water supplies is very energy intensive. In fact, the report notes that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that energy costs can represent as much as 65% of a utility's annual budget.

This is not surprising because energy is embedded in all stages of the water supply and treatment cycle: pumping, treatment, distribution, recycling. According to the Alliance for Water Efficiency, energy used for water supply and treatment constitutes:

- 19% of California's electric energy load
- 12% of Toronto's electric energy load
- 13% of national electric energy load (estimated)

Clearly, energy efficiency programs are critical to water utilities in controlling costs and customer rates as well as in promoting water conservation. Recognizing this, many water companies are embracing efforts to use renewable energy to improve energy efficiency and reduce their carbon footprint. For example, water utilities are installing solar technology, wind power applications, energy efficient lighting, exploring hydropower and taking advantage of the state's Renewable Energy Credit (ZREC) program and other energy efficient programs.

However, under current law, although municipal water and sewer departments are eligible to utilize virtual net metering to share the billing credit among their electric accounts, regional water authorities, metropolitan corporations and private water companies are not. Given the considerable benefits to the state, the environment and water utility customers in reducing energy costs and consumption, authorizing all water utilities to utilize virtual net metering is an important public policy goal.

CWWA therefore urges lawmakers to consider adding provisions to SB-394 which authorize water companies, as defined in Section 25-32a of the general statutes, to the entities eligible to utilize virtual net metering.